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ACADEMIC IDEALS.*

THE beginning of an academic year calls up at once the lighter thoughts of pleasing associations and the graver thoughts of inspiring obligations. Here on the table-land of intellectual life youth and age meet to labor for a season in the fields of knowledge and discovery. The confident optimism of youth seeks to be chastened by the gentle admonition of experience. Youth imparts its buoyancy to age, age imparts its wisdom to youth, and both are kindled by the glow of elevating aspirations. It is a time, therefore, for a blending of our lighter and our graver reflections.

Being delegated for the moment to speak to and for this academic body, it has seemed that some considerations on academic ideals might serve to awaken thought and to arouse zeal appropriate to the occasion. In the abstract, however, this would appear to be a delicate and a difficult subject; delicate because of diversity of sentiment, and difficult because of diversity of judgment, amongst those best qualified to speak, as to what academic ideals are, or as to what they should be. Hence it may seem fitting at the outset to suggest application to the views here set forth of the Socratic caution that they can hardly be exactly as represented, if not the more sweeping caution of Marcus Aurelius—'Remember that all is opinion.' But the delicacy and the difficulty of the subject

* Address read on the occasion of the opening exercises of Columbia University, September 28, 1904.